equivalent items in suitable non-tool applications. The invention may for example be used for inventory taking or stock taking/control purposes.

[0087] While the above detailed description has shown, described, and pointed out novel features as applied to various embodiments, it will be understood that various omissions, substitutions, and changes in the form and details of the device or process illustrated may be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit of the invention. As will be recognized, the present invention may be embodied within a form that does not provide all of the features and benefits set forth herein, as some features may be used or practiced separately from others.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for manufacturing an inventory item storage receptacle for an inventory control system, the system including at least one of said storage receptacles, a monitoring system for monitoring the removal and replacement of the inventory items from the storage locations, and a data processing system for recording the removal and replacement of inventory items from the recesses according to signals received from the monitoring system, the method comprising:

providing a quantity of mouldable material to form a body for the receptacle:

moulding the mouldable material with the shape of each of the inventory items to be stored in the receptacle, wherein individually-shaped recesses in the body that are matched to the inventory items are formed; and

setting the mouldable material to fix the shape of the receptacle.

2. The method according to claim **1**, further comprising forming a monitoring feature in the receptacle.

3. The method according to claim **2**, wherein the monitoring feature comprises a through hole.

4. The method according to claim **2**, wherein the monitoring feature comprises an item identification indication.

5. The method according to claim **1**, wherein the mouldable material includes sheet plastics material and the method further comprises heating the plastics material above an activation temperature to render it into a mouldable condition.

6. The method according to claim **5**, including using a vacuum forming machine to mould the mouldable material.

7. The method according to claim **1**, including forming at least one finger access recess for each inventory item recesses.

8. The method according to claim **7**, including, producing a blank or formation that can be used to form the finger access recess.

9. The method according claim **1**, including forming formations in the inventory item recesses that are arranged to retain the inventory item in the recess and to provide tactile feed back to a user removing the inventory item from the recess.

10. The method according to claim **9**, including forming at least one of the following for each recess: a substantially continuous overhanging lip that extends around the rim of the recess, one or more lip portions arranged to extend partially around the rim, an undercut portion, and at least one protrusion or rib in a side wall of the recess.

11. The method according to claim **1**, including forming a through hole in the mouldable material for receiving equipment associated with the inventory item monitoring system.

12. The method according to claim **1**, including forming inventory item identification indicia in the receptacle.

13. The method according to claim **1**, including texturing the recess and/or the surrounding material to provide an improved visual contrast between the recesses and the surrounding material.

14. The method according to claim **1**, including using first and second sheets of mouldable material layered one on top of the other and removing portions of one of the sheets after moulding to expose the other sheet.

15. The method according to claim **1**, including coating the receptacle with pigment, paint, dye, ink or similar in order to produce contrasting colours for the recesses and the surrounding material.

16. The method according to claim **1**, including forming at least one recess in a portion of a deformable material by forcing an object having the shape of the tool into the material to create the or each recess.

17. The method according to claim **16**, wherein the material is arranged to substantially retain the shape of the recess formed therein after the object has been removed.

18. The method according to claim **16**, including treating the material in order to fix the shape of the recess.

19. The method according to claim **18**, wherein the material is cured. by exposure to at least one of air, heat, light, UV light, and a curing agent.

20. The method according to claim **16** including placing a flexible layer of material over the deformable material before forcing the object into the material.

21. The method according to claim **16**, wherein the object is the tool.

22. The method according to claim **1**, wherein the inventory items are tools.

23. An inventory control system, comprising:

at least one inventory item storage receptacle having a moulded body including a plurality of inventory item storage locations, wherein each of the storage locations comprises an individually-shaped recess for receiving a specific inventory item, the shape of the recess being matched to the shape of the inventory item;

a monitoring system for monitoring the removal and replacement of the inventory items from the storage locations; and

a data processing system for recording the removal and replacement of inventory items from the recesses according to signals received from the monitoring system.

24. The inventory control system according to claim **23**, wherein the moulded body of the storage receptacle comprises sheet material with the recesses moulded therein.

25. The inventory control system according to claim **23**, wherein the storage receptacle is substantially ridged.

26. The inventory control system according to any one of claims **23**, wherein the storage receptacle is substantially non-porous and substantially non-absorbent.

27. The inventory control system according to claim **23**, wherein the storage receptacle is made from a plastics material, a curable polymer, a gel or a paste.

28. The inventory control system according to claim **23**, wherein each inventory item recess includes formations that are arranged to retain the inventory item in the recess.

29. The inventory control system according to claim **23**, wherein each inventory item recess includes formations that